

STORIES OF THE TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION GRADUATES ON PASSING THE LICENSURE EXAMINATION FOR TEACHER: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT: *The Licensure Examination for Teachers LET is a must for every technology education graduate to pass to practice teaching in the Basic Education Curriculum in the Philippines as mandated by the law. The ultimate goal of this study is to explore the lived experiences of technology education graduates on how they were able to achieve passing the LET. In this study, the researchers explored the success stories of how technology education graduates passed the LET using the Narrative Inquiry approach. Using a direct content thematic analysis, five themes were immersed in the interviews: Motivation, Support, Knowledge Acquisition, Proper Preparation, and Personal Beliefs. Furthermore, it is recommended in this paper to conduct the study quantitatively in a large population to examine the extent of each theme immersed in this study.*

Key Words: *Licensure Examination for Teachers, Narrative Inquiry, Technology Education Program, Higher Education Institution*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, having the license to teach is a primary step for every education graduate to practice the teaching profession. The Republic Act No. 9293, also known as the Philippine Teachers Professional Act of 1994 [1], states that:

"Except as otherwise allowed under this Act, no person shall practice or offer to practice the teaching profession in the Philippines or be appointed as teacher to any position without having previously obtained a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional license from the Commission." p2.

In connection with this, all individuals who would teach Basic Education in the Department of Education and professional education courses in Higher Education Institutions HEI must have a license before they can practice the profession. In the last nine LET examinations from March 2016- March 2022, one of the state universities in Mindanao got four records of below national passing rates with an average of 33.93%, lower than the average national passing rate of 36.25% [2]. Apart from this, in this University, 58% of the graduates who took the LET in Professional Regulation Commission PRC are from technology education among the four teacher education programs [3]. The institution should look into the factors that may influence the success of the teacher licensure exam [4] so that its operation will be improved in terms of efficiency and sustainability. It should be noted that passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers is an important requirement before entering the classroom [5] this is because the law requires all persons engaged in teaching, supervision, and administration of all elementary and secondary schools in the country must pass the Licensure Examination for Teachers.

HEI must learn how to adopt innovation in improving the Licensure Examination for Teachers LET among the graduates. On the other hand, the issue of waste needs to be addressed critically to optimize whatever meager resources the government can channel into improving access to and the quality of education in an emerging economy, indeed a vital key in sustaining the Philippines' newfound economic momentum[6]. Through an extensive literature review, there is a scarcity in the study of LET, particularly among the technology education graduates in a state university in the Philippines. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to examine

this phenomenon to innovate curriculum to improve the program offers. Also, it was recommended to conduct a study among technology education graduates to investigate the causes of the non-conformant in the licensure examination for teachers in PRC [7].

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized the qualitative research methodology to explore the lived experiences of the technology education graduates who took up the LET. Qualitative research is an inquiry approach in which the researcher explores a central phenomenon by asking the participants broad and general questions [8]. Apart from this, the Narrative Inquiry is the appropriate qualitative methodology utilized since the data gathered was based on the lived stories told by participants as they are embedded within their cultural, social, institutional, familial, political, and linguistic narratives [9]. The researcher needs to find ways to inquire into participants' experiences, their own experiences, and the co-constructed experiences developed through the relational inquiry process [10]. Therefore, the participants' lived experiences on how they passed the LET were the primary concern of this study. During the interview and discussion process, the researcher adhered very carefully to the necessity of moving slowly in ways that allow for listening and living [11]. This ensured that the participants were at ease and comfortable conversing with the interviewer, which is the researcher. Subsequently, the researchers conducted Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews among the participants who passed the LET to gather data for data analysis. Focus group discussion is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues [12]. The method aims to obtain data from a selected group rather than from a statistically representative sample of a broader population. Focus group discussion is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues. The number of participants per focus group usually ranged from 3 to 21, with a median of 10 participants [12]. In this study, the researcher followed the suggestion to obtain data from the selected group. The focus group setting was a comfortable room, a quiet

lounge with comfortable furniture, and a brightly lit classroom. Furthermore, for those participants in this activity who could not come for a face-to-face, the researcher utilized online platforms like zoom or google Meetings. An online interview is suitable when the researcher needs to obtain rich insight. For this, using online platforms or any online mode of communication, such as Google Meet, Zoom Meeting, Messenger, Mobile Calls, etc., with video and audio recordings capability was appropriate for the interview for data gathering. During the interview, the researcher asked each question in their own words, offered additional probes or prompts as needed, and communicated in a way that felt natural and comfortable to the participants [13]. When the interview was about to end, the participants were urged to offer any clarification concerns or confusing queries resulting from technological challenges. The researcher used video and audio devices to help validate the accuracy and completeness of the information collected [14]. It provides a detailed insight into the performance of both the respondent and the interviewer. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, including any nonverbal or background sounds. The qualitative data in the form of transcribed interviews were then stored in the personal computer of the researchers, ready for analysis. Each qualitative research strategy has its own techniques for performing, documenting, and assessing data analysis processes, but the individual researcher ultimately must ensure rigor and trustworthiness[15]. It is important to review various analysis types and determine which approach is most comfortable for qualitative data analysis [16]. This study used conventional content analysis, and coding categories from the text data gathered [17]. In conducting data analysis, the researchers became the instrument for analysis, making judgments about coding, categorizing, and theming the data [18]. This is because the rationality of the enterprise does not mean that every narrative that is told in an inquiry situation is true, easily understood, and socially appropriate [19]. Thus, the researcher and the respondents verified and confirmed the interpretation's coherence to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the codes, categories, and themes. This was triangulated through an FGD to verify the correctness of the themes that emerged during the interviews.

The researchers adhered to the ethical standards in terms of negotiation, respect, mutuality, and openness to multiple voices among the participants [10]. It was practiced in this study on how to make these stories of what it means to engage in narrative inquiry dependable and steady. For this reason, the researchers carefully observed ethical standards in conducting the narrative inquiry approach to carefully examine the words and move slowly in understanding them [11]. Notably, the researchers understood the use of personal and experiential narratives in teacher education [19].

The participants of the study

The researchers used purposive sampling because the respondents were homogenous. The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the researcher's deliberate choice due to the participant's qualities. It is a nonrandom technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants [19][20]. The participants were homogenous because; (a) they were graduates of technology education, (b) they took the board (c) they shared their stories

on taking the LET examination. The idea is to focus on this exact similarity and how it relates to the topic being researched. There were 27 participants purposely selected for this study for FGD and KII. Attached in table 1 is the profile of the participants.

Table 1.
Profile of the participants

	Focus Group Discussion FGD (n=17)	Key Informant Interview KII (n=10)
Sex		
Male	7	3
Female	10	7
Year Graduated		
2015	2	2
2016	3	2
2017	4	2
2018	5	2
2019	3	2
No. of LET exam		
1 st taker	15	8
2 nd taker	1	2
3 rd taker	1	0
<3 take	0	0

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The success of LET among the technology education graduates

The findings presented in this section sought to answer the research question of how technology education graduates are able to pass the LET. FGD and KII were done to collect the data to provide an in-depth understanding of the participants' success stories on passing the LET. A directed content analysis approach was employed in the thematic analysis of the data, in which 17 participants were from the FGD and 10 were from the KII.

Following the direct content analysis approach, five main themes emerged in the data analysis. These five main themes are labeled (a) Motivation, (b) Support, (c) Knowledge Acquisition, (d) Proper Preparation, and (e) Beliefs. Excerpts of the participants' narratives during the interview with their corresponding nodes, categories, and themes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.Themes that emerged from the FGD and KII

Narratives	Categories	Themes
Because I have many gossiping neighbors, they became one of the reasons why I was motivated to pass the LET. It was so embarrassing once I failed the LET (FGD1P3).	Extrinsic Individuals	MOTIVATION
I was with my friends and the love of my life. They helped me through my ups and downs (FGD1P7).		
There are so many challenges like financial, emotional, and family problems. But I only thought then that if I didn't pass or didn't really work hard, when would I do it? What I really felt at that time was that the goal was to pass the board exam. (FGD2P4).		
	Intrinsic Individuals	

I told myself that I couldn't give my parents anything other than the diploma and license because we were poor. (FGD2P3).

It's important because I wanted to be a teacher when I was still in elementary school. So, I was persistent in passing it because it's my dream to become a teacher. (KII2).

I pushed hard to pass because I knew there would be more opportunities if I had a license. That's why I have the mindset that I should pass the LET (FGD1P4).

The money is important because it is the payment to the review center (KIII).

My parents really supported me, and they gave me money. (KII7)

It was the teaching of the instructors that I passed the LET. (KII3)

But almost all my previous instructors really helped me pass the LET. They did the proper guidance to us to learn best in our courses well. (KII4).

Aside from sticking manila paper in my room and group study, I also look for resources on the internet. The internet is a huge help because the other knowledge in LET in 2019 was actually seen using the internet (KII5)

So, that is my assumption, and I made preparations, read all my books, and reviewed materials on that (KII10).

I dedicated my review and resigned from my work so that I could focus on reviewing (FGD2P1).

And of course, what I did also is I stopped my work because I served as a service crew during that time and stopped my work and concentrated on a review because I do believe that having a concentration on a review would make me pass (KII9).

Then one week before the exam, my advice is not to stress out, so enjoy it to relax your mind. That's what we did with my friends, and we went to Bukidnon at that time (FGD1P1).

And then enjoy life. Don't get stressed because stressed people are more prone to fail exams. Do the things that you love. (FGD1P2)

The real challenge is that I'm not smart, but I love studying (FGD2P2).

I worked hard to study because I have a dream in life (FGD1P1).

Because when I took the Board examination, I told myself I only had two options. I have only two results from the Board examination. Either I could be on the top, or I will just pass the exam (KII5).

By God's mercy, I was able to answer. That's the reason why I passed the LET because I studied and, most of all, I prayed (PEI 10).

We also have superstitions like wearing something red or red underwear. So, I wore red colored shorts blessed at the church. The pencils and paper we used were given to the proctor, and I should not look back, did not

look back because I believed I would never return to take the exam again (FGD1P11).

Motivation

The Motivation theme has three categories: Extrinsic Individuals, Intrinsic Individuals, and Self-Dream. These are further supported by 17 statements. During the personal interviews, graduates shared that they passed the LET because they were motivated by the people surrounding them. Also, their dream of becoming a professional teachers influenced them to study harder to pass the LET to become licensed teachers. According to participant FGD1P3, "my motivation is my family, especially my brother," and that's why I commit myself to pass the LET. This was also confirmed by participant FGD2P2, "my motivations are coming from my family, my loved ones. That's why I strived to finish my degree and pass the Board Examination for Teachers." In connection with this, a persistent self-dream to become a future teacher motivated the graduate to pass the LET. This was confirmed by participant KII5, who said, "It's really important because when I was still in elementary school, I really wanted to be a teacher. So, I was really persistent in passing it because it's my dream to become a teacher". The study showed a positive correlation between the levels of external motivation, internal motivation, and motivation for the subject value of the individuals who received sufficient social support from their environment [21]. This was also confirmed that the student's academic performance could be correlated to the home environment [22, 23]. In addition, the self-determined students were more likely to have achieved more positive adult outcomes [23].

Support

The Support theme has two categories: Monetary Sustenance and Instructors' Guidance. These are further supported by 11 statements. During the interviews, graduates shared that they were able to pass the LET because they were supported in terms of financial needs in their studies and LET reviews. Also, proper guidance from their respective instructors in learning while in the study makes them learn the competencies that passed the said board examination. Participant KII3 said, "The money is important because it is the payment to the review center. It was also said by participant KII2, "I can say that money has a big impact on learning, to buy the materials in TLE laboratory courses. Moreover, the guidance from the instructors makes them learn the competencies in LET while they are still studying. This was confirmed by participant KII4, "almost all my previous instructors really helped me pass the LET because they teach well all the competencies in professional education courses and major courses."

Financial constraints will significantly affect the performance of the pre-service teacher in their performance and education quality [24]. Indeed, school socioeconomic status is strongly associated with academic achievement for all students[25]. Family income may

Self-Dream		
Monetary Sustenance	SUPPORT	
Instructors' Guidance		
Access to review materials	Knowledge Acquisition	
Join Review center		
Minimize Stress	Proper Preparation	
Responsible Student		
Faith	Personal Beliefs	
Superstitions		

directly impact a child's academic outcomes, or variations in achievement could be a function of the school the child attends [26]. The teacher and attending review classes may also influence graduates to pass the LET [27]. Teaching practices most proximal to these measures predict students' attitudes and behaviors, including teachers' emotional support and classroom organization [28]. Indeed, academic achievement and student motivation are influenced by the quality of the relationship that the students and teachers have with each other [29].

Knowledge Acquisition

The knowledge acquisition theme has two categories: Access to Review Materials and Join Review Center. These are further supported by 14 statements. During the interviews, graduates shared that they passed the LET because they have plenty of review materials to read while in review. Participant KI5 said, *"Aside from sticking manila paper in my room and group study, I also look for resources on the internet. The internet is a huge help because the other knowledge in LET in 2019 was actually seen using the internet.* Also, enrolling in a reputable review center makes them competent to pass the LET. This was confirmed by participant KI7, said, *"I took a review center, sir, and it was so helpful for me when I took the board. I was able to review again most of the competencies in different courses that I took when I was in college."*

The study confirmed that having access to the review materials can help the takers pass the examination in LET [30]. Also, The LET review result and LET Board result were effective predictors for success in the LET [31]. This is why attending a review for LET is a must for every graduate who wishes to take the examination.

Proper Preparation

The Proper Preparation theme has two categories: Minimize Stress and Responsible Student. These are further supported by 12 statements. During the personal interviews, graduates shared that they passed the LET because they prepared properly by minimizing stress before the examination. Also, developing study habits while they are students makes them very much prepared to take the test. According to participant FGD2P1, *"get rid of negative thoughts and think positively always in life. I can do it to finish my study and become a licensed teacher someday"*. This was also confirmed by participant KI1, *"one of the ways to pass the LET is positivity like manifesting to pass."* Moreover, participant FGD1P1 said, *"I worked hard to study because I have a dream in life."* This result confirms that academic stress negatively affects student performance [32]. Also, Academic achievement was positively correlated with approach orientation and performance-approach goals among the students [33].

Personal Beliefs

The Personal Beliefs theme has two categories: Faith and Superstitious. These are further supported by 8 statements. During the personal interviews, graduates shared that they passed the LET because they have faith in their God and worked hard while studying and that God answered their prayer to pass the LET. Also, wearing a lucky charm during the examination is one of the beliefs to pass. According to participant FGD2P2, *"there are so many courses to take , but I overcame all challenges because I always prayed to God that I would pass the board exam.* Also participant FGD1P1 said,

"we also have superstitions, like wearing something red or red underwear during the examination. So, I wore red colored shorts blessed at the church. The pencils and paper we used were given to the proctor, and I should not look back, did not look back because I believe in myself that I will never come back again to take the exam". The student examinees who took the Licensure Examination for Teachers observed and followed different superstitious beliefs before, during, and after the exam. It was found that these beliefs have positive and negative effects [34].

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The LET is the most awaited to take after graduation among education graduates. To fulfill this dream of becoming a licensed teacher, one must be passed on it. A teaching License is a must for every individual who wishes to practice as a professional teacher in the Basic Education Curriculum in the Philippines. With this, it was recommended in this paper that individuals who wish to enroll in an education program must work hard to fulfilling this dream. First, it needs motivation from both internal and external people. Second, have faith and be persistent in developing study habits while taking the courses and reviewing. Third, attend a review class before taking the actual LET to understand better key ideas and concepts that will likely be the foundation for further learning in a course. And lastly, it is recommended in this paper to conduct the study quantitatively in a large population to examine the extent to each theme immersed in this study.

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